

Throughout middle school and high school, he made the Honor Roll. He was involved in clubs, and he excelled in every sport that he played. After graduating from South Dade High School in 2005, Seaman Ortega went on to study at Florida Career College where he obtained a degree in Web site design.

Then Seaman Ortega joined the military because of the core values military life has to offer. He wanted to give back to a nation that had given him and his family so much opportunity. So, as a hospital corpsman, he was a Navy medic who treated those who were injured in combat.

His sister Aracely Ortega described him as an "awesome brother and an awesome friend." She also said, "He had a lot of respect for this Nation, and he paid the ultimate sacrifice, unfortunately."

For his brave service and sacrifice, Seaman Ortega was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart, the Combat Action Ribbon, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the NATO Non Article V Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

He is survived by his parents—William and Marianela Ortega—and by his five sisters, and hundreds gathered, over the weekend in Miami, to pay respect and to pay tribute to this American fallen hero.

Our grateful Nation grieves with his family during this difficult time, and our grateful Nation will never forget William Ortega, a true American hero.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Madam Speaker, Democrats in Congress will continue to take America in a new direction, creating good American jobs, lowering taxes for the middle class and small businesses, and building a strong new foundation for the economy and for Main Street.

We continue to see signs of economic recovery resulting from the economic policies of the Democratic Congress and the Obama administration responding to the Bush recession and the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. More must be done to create and save jobs, but the latest signs of recovery include the HIRE Act, a bipartisan bill to create 300 jobs; American Workers, State, and Business Relief Act, tax incentives to spur business innovation and tax cuts; the Small Business and Infrastructure Jobs Tax Act extends aid to States to provide subsidies to employers, including small businesses; and the Home Star bill, which creates much-needed jobs in the manufacturing sector by providing tax rebates to homeowners who install energy-saving products.

Last week, the U.S. Department of Energy announced \$29 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding to develop and expand weatherization training centers across

the country. These projects will provide green job training for local workers in energy efficiency retrofitting and weatherization services.

Congress and the President have worked together to enact an array of broad-based tax cuts for working and middle-class families and small business owners—ending an era of Republican tax breaks focused only on the wealthy. These tax cuts are injecting consumer demand into the economy and spurring job creation.

All totaled, Congress has enacted more than \$800 billion in tax cuts, with another \$285 billion making their way through Congress, such as permanent estate tax relief and the R&D tax credit to spur business innovation.

REPUBLICAN RECORD OF FAILURE

Congressional Republicans threaten to take us back to the failed policies that created the economic crisis—siding with the special interests: Wall Street banks, credit card companies, Big Oil, and insurance companies.

These economic and fiscal policies created the Bush recession—the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression—with job losses of nearly 800,000 a month—and nearly doubled our national debt.

Republicans have voted against every major piece of economic legislation—from the Recovery Act to Wall Street reform—choosing the special interests over American workers, their families and small businesses.

Democrats in Congress will continue to take America in a New Direction, working to create American jobs and a strong new foundation for the economy, protecting Main Street and the middle class. We're getting results.

During the last 3 months of the Bush administration, we lost on average 726,000 jobs. In the last 3 months, we have created an average of 186,000 jobs. The current unemployment rate is 9.9 percent.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HALVORSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

OUR POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my continuing and growing concern over our policy in Afghanistan.

As General Petraeus appears before the Senate and as we are being asked to consider tens of billions of dollars in supplemental funding for the war, I believe that now is the time for us to ask tough questions and to demand straight answers.

Of all the problems that President Obama inherited from the Bush administration, Afghanistan is the one that keeps getting more complicated. In just the past few weeks, two brave, young soldiers from my congressional district in Fall River, Massachusetts, lost their lives in Afghanistan. So this

is a big deal, and we need to get it right.

Last December, President Obama told the American people that we would begin to withdraw our forces next July. The American people deserve to know if that plan is still in place and how we are going to get there.

Much has been made about General Stanley McChrystal's comments in Rolling Stone magazine about the Nation's civilian leadership; but frankly, Madam Speaker, this is much bigger than a few ill-considered comments. Indeed, there are other parts of the article that I find to be much more disturbing.

For instance, General McChrystal, himself, referred to the biggest military operation of the year so far, the offensive in Marja, as a "bleeding ulcer."

General McChrystal's chief of operations said that Afghanistan "is not going to look like a win, smell like a win or taste like a win. This is going to end in an argument."

Before the Marja offensive began, General McChrystal personally went to President Karzai's palace to get his consent on the operation. According to the article, "Karzai's staff, however, insisted that the President was sleeping off a cold, and could not be disturbed. After several hours of haggling, McChrystal finally enlisted the aid of Afghanistan's defense minister, who persuaded Karzai's people to wake the President from his nap."

A senior adviser to General McChrystal said, "If Americans pulled back and started paying attention to this war, it would become even less popular."

A senior military official said this, "There's a possibility we could ask for another surge of U.S. forces next summer if we see success here."

So the administration has determined General McChrystal's exit strategy, but it is the exit strategy for the rest of our brave soldiers that I am more worried about it.

Madam Speaker, I voted in 2001 to go to war in Afghanistan—to hunt down al Qaeda and to eliminate their threat, and I would cast that same vote today in a heartbeat. Though, what we are doing in Afghanistan today is far beyond that original authorization. We are engaged in extensive, expensive nation-building in Afghanistan.

Frankly, given the level of unemployment and the severe economic situation we face in the United States, I would rather do a little more nation-building here at home. We have borrowed \$350 billion—added to the debt—for the war in Afghanistan.

My Republican friends have refused to support extending unemployment benefits for our out-of-work Americans because they say we can't afford it. We are told we can't afford to help States' avoiding laying off teachers. We are told we can't afford to improve our roads and bridges or to help more families afford a college education. We are